

# Hatchery Highlights

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Iron River NFH News and Updates



Winter 2007

**Topics this month:** \*Spawning Helpers  
\*Fish and Math \*Raffle Winners  
\*Brood Stocking \*School Field Trip  
\*Fall Fingerlings



ALL HANDS ON DECK!



Purdue students and Rachel Mockler spawn coasters.

Iron River National Fish Hatchery was very fortunate to receive quite a response to their "cry for help" for spawning in 2006. At least 1-2 volunteers were present for each week of spawning from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to November 22<sup>nd</sup>. We were also fortunate to have enough helpers for several weeks to set up two spawning crews, one group working with lake trout and one group working with coaster brook trout... condensing the workload into 1-2 days instead of 2-3. With the help of our "beefed up" workforce, the staff at Iron River NFH spawned over 1300 lake trout, collecting over 5 million eggs and 1100 coaster brook trout, collecting over 2 million eggs to date. (We should be completing our

coaster brook trout spawning this week... keep your fingers crossed for us!!) Iron River NFH would like to heartily thank the following people: Lara Fondow (Neceda NWR) and her father Terry Fondow, Wayne Talo (Jordan River NFH), Ed Lagace (Regional Sign Center), staff from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Tribal Hatchery, Janis Kacvinsky, Janet Kohl and Jan Karlen from the Superior's Reel Women sportsmen's group, Bobbie Stewart (Luddington Biological Station), Bruce Schiller, Jay Guerin and his 14 students from the Agriculture and Food Sciences Academy, Anna Varian and Lorena Edenfield from Purdue University and Rachel Mockler (Leopold WMD).



Volunteers net lake trout brood into the tub for spawning.

AND THE WINNER IS....



The Haworth Family at work!



Alva and Ann Rankin show off their big fish!

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Iron River National Fish Hatchery attended the Fishermen's Expo in Poplar, Wisconsin. The hatchery provided two door prizes as opportunities to come out to the hatchery, spawn brood stock and enjoy lunch. Both winners of the prizes were excited to finally come out and redeem their certificates! Ann and Alva Rankin came out early in the lake trout spawning season and were able to handle the really big fish!! Ryan Haworth and his sons Michael and Brady took advantage of the day off from school to come out and handle the coaster brook trout brood fish. The volunteers genuinely enjoyed

getting messy with the fish and the staff at Iron River NFH greatly appreciated the extra hands. The hatchery is hoping to attend the Fishermen's Expo next April to do a little more "recruiting" for the 2007 spawning season!

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



These students are suited up and ready to spawn some fish!



On October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006, students from the Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy made the trek up north with their teacher Jay Guerin to spend two days at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. This was the second field trip Mr. Guerin has brought to the hatchery, (20 students and parents accompanied Mr. Guerin in 2003) and we are hoping to keep this connection with the school for years to come. The

fourteen students were able to assist hatchery staff with spawning brood fish, sample counting production fish, performing the Geodes Index analysis on production fish and fall length/weight inventories on brood fish. This unique opportunity gave the students hands on experience with the fish work and hopefully convinced more than a few of them to pursue a career with the Fish and Wildlife Service! The extra hands were a great help to the hatchery staff, enabling us to complete a large portion of our fall projects.

## IN CLASS AGAIN!

In November 2006, Biologist Angela Baran worked with seventh grade math teacher Kathy Sill to develop a classroom project to show students how math applies in life. This partnership was formed in 2005, when Ms. Sill contacted the hatchery to find out about presenters and projects for her math class. The project of using math to calculate egg numbers held at Iron River National Fish Hatchery was such a success, planning was in the works to try it again in 2006. This year it was decided to expand the project to two days, giving more time in the classroom for students to work and also to allow for a small presentation explaining what goes on at the hatchery and where the eggs they were going to be working with came from. Ms. Sill was able to create a worksheet for the students to guide them through the process of sample counting eggs and calculating the number of eggs on station that correlated with the activities Angela Baran planned out. While some students were initially "grossed out", they quickly got over their unease and dove right into handling the eggs. They were fascinated by the small fish moving inside the egg. The students also did a couple double takes when they started their calculations and discovered some of the answers were over 1 million! Both Angela Baran and Kathy Sill are hoping to continue the tradition next year and possibly expand the opportunities.

## IRON RIVER NFH REMOVES EXCESS BROODSTOCK LAKERS



Biologist Kurt Schilling releases lake trout into Beaver Dam Lake.

This past fall, staff from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery loaded excess lake trout from many different strains and year classes and headed for several lakes throughout the region. With the approval of the MI DNR and Ashland Fisheries Resource Office, Lakes Roland and Independence, (both in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan), were stocked with approximately 900 Superior Apostle Island strain broodstock. The Keweenaw Bay area of Lake Superior received about 260 adults of the Superior Traverse Island strain. With the approval of the WI DNR and the Ashland Fisheries Resource Office, Beaver Dam Lake, in northern Wisconsin, was stocked with approximately 500 adults of both broodstock strains. The trout averaged between 16 and 30 inches in length and weighed between 2 and 12 pounds. Each fish had a strain specific fin clip for identification. The reason for stocking these large fish was that the broodstock rearing facility had reached capacity and younger fish are stepping up to take over. The reduction of nearly 10,000 lbs of fish greatly improves the rearing capacity at the hatchery and will supply exceptional recreational opportunities

for the general public.

## LAKERS OF THE FALL

This past fall the Iron River National Fish Hatchery, with assistance provided by Pendills Creek and Jordan River National Fish Hatcheries, successfully planted approximately 383,000 fingerling lake trout. These fall fingerlings were reared at the Iron River hatchery in addition to the 1.2 million yearling production fish that will be stocked in the spring of 2007. These fish were loaded on to trucks, transported many miles, and stocked at dusk in several sites around Lake Michigan. The stocking locations were determined with the assistance of the Green Bay Fisheries Resource Office. These fall planted trout helped fulfill requirements set by the 2000 U.S. vs. MI Consent Decree and added to lake trout restoration efforts in Lake Michigan.



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